

With these mortals on the ground.

Winde Hornes.

Enter Theseus, Egeus, Hippolita and all his traine.

Theseus. Goe one of you, finde out the Forrester,
For now our obseruation is perform'd;
And since we haue the wayward of the day,
My Loue shall heare the musicke of my hounds.
Vncouple in the Western valley, let them goe;
Dispatch I say, and finde the Forrester.
We will faire Queene, vp to the Mountaines top,
And marke the musickall confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hippolita. I was with *Hercules* and *Cadmus* once,
When in a wood of *Crete* they bayed the Beare
With hounds of *Sparta*; neuer did I heare
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groones,
The skies, the fountaines, every region neere,
Seeme all one inuall cry. I neuer heard
So musickall a discord, such sweet thunder.

Theseus. My hounds are bred out of the *Spartan* kinde,
So flew'd, so fanded, and their heads are hung
With eares that sweepe away the morning dew,
Crooke kneed, and dew-lap'd, like *Thessalian* Bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each vnder each. A cry more tuneable
Was neuer hallow'd to, nor cheer'd with horne;
In *Crete*, in *Sparta*, nor in *Thessaly*:
Iudge when you heare. But soft, what nimphs are these?

Egeus. My Lord, this is my daughter heere asleepe,
And this *Lysander*, this *Demetrius* is,
This *Helena*, olde *Nedars* *Helena*,
I wonder of this being heere together.

Theseus. No doubt they rose vp early, to obserue
The right of May; and hearing our intent,
Came heere in grace of our solemnity.
But speake *Egeus*, is not this the day
That *Hermia* should giue answer of her choice?

Egeus. It is, my Lord.
Theseus. Goe bid the hant-men wake them with their
hornes.

Hornes and they wake.

Shout within, they all start vp.

Theseus. Good morning friends: Saint *Valentine* is past,
Begin these wood birds but to couple now?

Lysander. Pardon my Lord.

Theseus. I pray you all stand vp.
I know you two are Riual enemies.
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is to farre from ialousie,
To sleepe by bate, and feare no enmitie?

Lysander. My Lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Halfe sleepe, halfe waking. But as yet, I sweare,
I cannot truly say how I came heere.
But as I thinke (for truly would I speake)
And now I doe bethinke me, so it is;
I came with *Hermia* hither. Our intent
Was to be gone from *Athens*, where we might be
Without the perill of the *Athenian* Law.

Egeus. Enough, enough, my Lord: you haue enough;
I beg the Law, the Law, vpon his head;
They would haue stolne away, they would *Demetrius*,
Thereby to haue defeated you and me;
You of your wife, and me of my consent;
Of my consent, that she should be your wife.

Demetrius. My Lord, faire *Helena* told me of their stealth;
Of this purpose hither, to this wood,

And I in furie hither followed them;
Faile *Helena*, in fancy followed me;
But my good Lord, I wot not by what power,
(But by some power it is my loue,
To *Hermia* (melted as the snow) and euen last night
Seems to me now as the remembrance of an idle gaudie,
Which in my childehood I did doat vpon:
And all the faith, the vertue of my heart,
The obiect and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is onely *Helena*. To her, my Lord,
Was I betroth'd, ere I see *Hermia*,
But like a sicknesse did I loath this food,
But as in health, come to my naturall taste,
Now doe I wish it, loue it, long for it,
And will for euermore be true to it.

Theseus. Faire Lovers, you are fortunately met;
Of this discourse we shall heare more anon.
Egeus, I will over-bear your will,
For in the Temple, by and by with vs,
These couples shall eternally be knit.
And for the morning now is something worne,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.

Away, with vs to *Athens*; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come *Hippolita*.

Exit Duke and Lords.

Demetrius. These things seeme small & vndistinguishable,
Like farre off mountaines turned into Clouds.

Her. Me-thinks I see these things with parted eye,
When euery thing seemes double.

Hel. So me-thinks:
And I haue found *Demetrius*, like a iewel,
Mine owne, and not mine owne.

Demetrius. It seemes to mee,
That yet we sleepe, we dreame. Do not you thinke,
The Duke was heere, and bid vs follow him?

Her. Yea, and my Father.
Hel. And *Hippolita*.

Lys. And he bid vs follow to the Temple.
Demetrius. Why then we are awake; lets follow him, and
by the way let vs recount our dreames.

Bottome wakes.

Exit Lovers.

Clo. When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer,
My next is, most faire *Piramus*. Hey ho. *Peter Quince*,
Flute the bellows-mender? *Snout* the tinker? *Starveling*?
Gods my life! Stole hence, and left me asleepe: I
haue had a most rare vision. I had a dreame, past the wit
of man, to say, what dreame it was. Man is but an Ass,
if he goe about to expound this dreame. Me-thought I was,
and me-thought I had. But man is but a patch'd foole,
if he will offer to say, what me-thought I had. The eye of
man hath not heard, the eare of man hath not seen, mans
hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceiue, nor his
heart to report, what my dreame was. I will get *Peter*
Quince to write a ballad of this dreame, it shall be called
Bottomes Dreame, because it hath no bottom; and I will
sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke. Per-
adventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it
at her death.

Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbe, Snout, and Starveling.

Quince. Haue you sent to *Bottomes* house? Is he come
home yet?

Starveling. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt hee is
transported.

Thisbe.

Thisbe. If he come not, then the play is mar'd. It goes
not forward, doth it?

Quince. It is not possible: you haue not a man in all
Athens, able to discharge *Piramus* but he.

Thisbe. No, hee hath simply the best wit of any handy-
craft man in *Athens*.

Quince. Yea, and the best person too, and hee is a very
Paramour, for a sweet voyce.

Thisbe. You must say, Paragon. A Paramour is (God
blesse vs) a thing of nought.

Enter Snug the Ioyner.

Snug. Masters, the Duke is comming from the Tem-
ple, and there is two or three Lords & Ladies more mar-
ried: If our sport had gone forward, we had all bin made
men.

Thisbe. O sweet bully *Bottom*: thus hath hee lost fix-
pence a day, during his life; he could not haue scaped fix-
pence a day. And the Duke had not giuen him sixpence
a day for playing *Piramus*, hee be hang'd. He would haue
deserued it. Sixpence a day in *Piramus*, or nothing.

Enter Bottom.

Bot. Where are these Lads? Where are these hearts?
Quince. *Bottom*, o most couragious day! O most hap-
pie hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders; but ask me
not what. For if I tell you, I am no true *Athenian*. I
will tell you euery thing as it fell out.

Quince. Let vs heare, sweet *Bottom*.

Bot. Not a word of me all that I will tell you, is, that
the Duke hath dined. Get your apparell together, good
strings to your beards, new ribbands to your pumps,
meete presently at the Palace, euery man looke ore his
part: for the short and the long is, our play is preferred:
In any case let *Thisbe* haue cleane linnen; and let not him
that playes the Lion, paire his nailes, for they shall hang
out for the Lions clawes. And most deare Actors, cate
no Onions, nor Garlicke; for wee are to utter sweete
breath, and I doe not doubt but to heare them say, it is a
sweet Comedy. No more words: away, go away.

Exeunt.

Actus Quintus.

Enter Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus and his Lords.

Hippolita. 'Tis strange my *Theseus*, these lovers speake of.

Theseus. More strange then true. I neuer may beleuee
These anticke fables, nor these Fairy toyes,
Lovers and mad men haue such seething braines,
Such shaping phantasies, that apprehend more
Then coole reason euer comprehends.
The Lunaticke, the Louer, and the Poet,
Are of imagination all compact.

One sees more diuels then vast hell can hold;
That is the mad man. The Louer, all as franticke,
Sees *Helens* beauty in a brow of *Egypt*.

The Poets eye in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance
From heauen to earth, from earth to heauen.
And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things
Vnknowne; the Poets pen turns them to shapcs,
And giues to aire nothing, a locall habitation,
And a name. Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That if it would but

It comprehends some

Or in the night, imag

How easie is a bush

Hippolita. But all the st

And all their minds tr

More witnesseth than

And growes to some

But how focuer, stran

Enter Lovers, Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius, Helena, and Bottom.

Theseus. Heere come

Lysander. More then to

Theseus. Come now,

we haue,

To weare away this

Between our after sup

Where is our vsuall

What Reuels are in

To ease the anguish of

Call *Egeus*.

Egeus. Heere might

Theseus. Say, what a

ning?

What maske? What

The lazie time, if not

Egeus. There is a br

Make choise of which

Lysander. The battell w

By an *Athenian* Eunuc

Theseus. Wee'l none o

In glory of my kinsma

Lysander. The riot of the

Tearing the *Thracian*

Theseus. That is an ol

When I from *Thebes* c

Lysander. The thrice thr

of learning, late deca

Theseus. That is some

Not forting with a nup

Lysander. A tedious bre

And his loue *Thisbe*; v

Theseus. Merry and tra

is, hot ice, and wondro

finde the concord of t

Egeus. A play there is

Which is as breefe, as

But by ten words, my

Which makes it tedious

There is not one word

And tragically my nobl

Rehears't, I must confe

But more merrie teares

Neuer shed.

Theseus. What are the

Egeus. Hard handed

Which neuer labour'd

And now haue toyed

With this same play, a

Theseus. And we will